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1947



*COLONIAL ANNUAL REPORTS*

# British Honduras

1947



## Twin Cities Campus







Gt. Brit. Colonial office

# ANNUAL REPORT ON BRITISH HONDURAS FOR THE YEAR 1947.

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## PART I

### General Review

THE outstanding events of the year under review relate more to first steps taken in new directions than to the tangible progress which has in fact been made in matters already in hand. The first of such events is the Conference on the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September at which the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies presided and to which this Colony sent its delegates—three members of the Legislative Council, with the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney General as Advisers. The other event is the visit in November of the Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir Geoffrey Evans to investigate the desirability of settling in British Honduras, persons from some of the over-populated Colonies in this area.

It is, of course, not possible at this stage to say whither these ventures may lead but each one, fraught as it is with great possibilities, has aroused considerable interest and given rise to not a little discussion: the fact that the wheels have been set in motion has created, throughout the Colony, a feeling of real expectancy, and one or other of these projects has brought to many a measure of encouragement as to the future of the Colony.

Development within the Colony was mainly connected with improvement in the system of road communications. A new road from Corozal to St. Helena on the Mexican Border at the Rio Hondo was completed, and this will improve communication with Chetumal, capital of the Mexican province of Quintana Roo, when a new ferry has been constructed. Work on the Belize-Cayo road was pushed ahead, and a further 14 miles of all weather road was completed. A new road from Belize to the Cayo road *via* Hector Creek was started; this will reduce by 11 miles the road distance between Belize and El Cayo. On the 2nd September the fine new Haulover Bridge five miles from Belize, was opened, and during the year extensive repairs to roads through four miles of swamp between Belize and the Haulover Bridge were completed.

Foreign concerns showed signs of interest in developing a fishery trade with the Colony, and lobsters were exported to the U.S.A. and Guatemala. One American-owned trawler with deep freeze apparatus was engaged in taking lobster tails and a variety of frozen fish to Miami, Florida.

The total revenue of the Colony increased from a 1945 figure of \$1,924,171 to \$2,206,218 in 1947. Internal taxation, which produced \$479,050 in 1945, increased to \$639,150 in 1947. This was mainly due to an increase in income tax revenue from \$186,364 in 1945 to \$346,818 in 1947, and to import duties which, owing to the high cost of merchandise, increased by some

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\$300,000 between 1945 and the end of 1947. A gradual annual increase in exports of pine lumber and mahogany lumber was also reflected in improved figures for export duty. No grant-in-aid was drawn from His Majesty's Exchequer in 1947.

On the 1st February, some 200 sawmill employees went on strike for higher wages. The matter was submitted to arbitration, and following the publication of the award of the single arbitration, the strikers returned to work a little over a fortnight later.

The Legislative Council was mainly concerned with legislation of a social nature, the principal Ordinances being those related to Credit Unions, Rent Restriction, Town and Country Planning, and Slum Clearance and Housing.

In October, 1942, the War Office assumed military control in the Colony and established the British Honduras Battalion, North Caribbean Force. In 1944 a contingent of sixty-six other ranks and three officers of the Battalion left Belize for active service overseas and returned in January, 1946. The Battalion was disbanded on the 1st July, 1947.

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## PART II

### Chapter I: Population

At a Census taken in April, 1946, the population of the Colony was 59,149, and at the end of 1947 it was estimated to be 61,503, comprising 29,835 males and 31,668 females. Intermixing is such that racial classification of the population is difficult and unreliable, but it may be said that the Northern and Western Districts are inhabited principally by the descendants of Spanish and Maya Indian peoples. In the Capital, the 'Creoles' (descendants of the early settlers) are in the majority though there are a large number of people of Latin extraction from the neighbouring republics, and of Syrians and Chinese. There is a limited number of Europeans and United States nationals. There is in the Southern Districts of Stann Creek and Toledo, a predominance of Caribs but Maya Indians have some large settlements in the extreme South.

The population was distributed in the Districts of the Colony as follows:

<i>District</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Area in Square Miles</i>	<i>Persons per Square Mile</i>
Belize .. ..	27,870	1,623	17.18
Northern .. ..	12,810	2,180	5.87
Stann Creek ..	6,614	840	7.87
Toledo .. ..	6,522	2,125	3.06
Cayo .. ..	7,687	1,830	4.20
<hr/> Colony .. .. <hr/>	<hr/> 61,503 <hr/>	<hr/> 8,598 <hr/>	<hr/> 7.15 <hr/>

A review of the 1931 and 1946 census figures shows increases in the population of all the Districts except the Northern, which declined 3.81 per cent., although the preponderance of births over deaths from year to year during the intervening period would have lead one to expect an increase. This position rather supports the general view of a trend to concentration in Belize due to the exodus, from the agriculturally—important Northern District, of small-planters, who, it is common belief, have forsaken the land in search of more lucrative occupations. The slightest margin of increase is to be observed in the Toledo District (2.42 per cent.), which is no doubt due partly to abnormal death rates throughout the years 1931 to 1946, (which reached the alarming figure of 53.6 in 1945), and partly to migration from the District of its residents in search of employment.

Births per thousand of the population showed an appreciable change on previous years, the rates being 32 in 1944, 33.2 in 1945, 34.3 in 1946 and 40.2 in 1947. Deaths, which were just over 18 per thousand in 1944 and 1945, declined to 16.9 in 1946 (probably due to a sharp decline in the infantile mortality rate from 14 per cent. of the births in 1944 and 1945 to 10.5 in 1946), and recorded at 17.5 in 1947. The infantile mortality rate, which, in Belize, rose from 8.01 in 1946 to 10.65, is highest in the Toledo District with its large Maya population, which recorded rates of over 27 per cent. in 1944 and 1945, but declined to just under 19 in 1946 and further to 16.5 in 1947. The rates in the other Districts were as follows: Northern 14.92; Stann Creek 8.46; Cayo 13.82 and for the Colony, 12.01.

# Chapter II: Occupations, Wages, Labour Organization

## PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS

In British Honduras the employment available in the forest industries, the mainstay of the Colony's economy, is largely seasonal, timber extraction operations being principally confined to the first six months of the year when the dry weather permits logging over primitive roads, while chicle bleeding is carried out in the wet months, July to February, as rains induce a good flow of gum from the trees.

A statement of the particulars of the employment available in the principal occupations follows:

Industry or Occupation	Number employed	Wages or earnings	Approximate average hours per week	Remarks
<b>PRIMARY PRODUCTION</b>				
<i>Mahogany</i> Labourers	926	\$20.00 to \$23.00 per month plus rations at \$2.50 per week	50	Employment usually seasonal from October to June.
Tractor and Truck Drivers	212	\$60.00 to \$75.00 per month and rations at \$3.50 per week	50	
Other Workers	305	\$30.00 a month and rations at \$3.50 per week	50	
	1,443			
<b>Pine and other secondary woods</b>				
Fellers and others engaged in the extraction of logs from the forests	160	\$1.68 per day	50	
Tractor and Truck Drivers	43	\$50.00 to \$65.00 a month	50	
Other Workers	35	\$1.50 per day	50	

Industry or Occupation	Number employed	Wages or earnings	Approximate average hours per week	Remarks
<i>Chicle</i> Bleeders	1,688	25 cents a pound for Crown Gum and 35 cents a pound for Superior Gum. Average earnings \$75.00 per month	50	Seasonal employment June to March.
Muleteers and others	74	\$30.00 per month	50	
	1,762			
<i>Public Works Department</i> Road Labourers	382	\$1.44 and \$1.68 a day	48	Intermittent employment averaging 10 days a month.
Lorry Drivers	44	\$2.48 a day	48	
Carpenters	38	\$2.25 to \$3.80 a day	48	
Other Tradesmen	111	\$2.00 to \$4.00 a day	48	
	575			
<i>SERVICES</i> <i>Transport of goods by sea</i> (i) Stevedore Labourers	90	35 cents per hour (and food free) plus overtime		
(ii) Stevedores loading logs	60	50 cents to 75 cents per hour		
Dock Labourers	75	30 cents per hour		
	225			
<i>Distributive Trades—Wholesale and Retail (Belize)</i> Shop Assistants Male	145	\$3.00 to \$30.00 weekly	45	
Female	163	\$2.50 to \$10.00 weekly	45	
Office Clerks Male	54	\$5.00 to \$30.00 weekly	45	
Female	28	\$5.00 to \$15.00 weekly	45	

Industry or Occupation	Number employed	Wages or earnings	Approximate average house per week	Remarks
<b>Shop Assistants (District Towns)</b>				
Male	51	\$2.00 to \$10.00 weekly	60	
Female	24	\$3.00 to \$6.00 weekly	60	
	470			
<b>Agriculture</b>				
Coconut Plantations	100	\$1.00 a day	48	
Cattle Farms (Western District)	150	\$22.48 a month	48	
Cane Fields	420	\$1.00 a day	60	During crop season—January to May. Out of crop season.
Cane Fields	216	\$1.00 a day	48	
	886			
<b>SECONDARY PRODUCTION</b>				
<b>Sawmills</b>				
Supervisors and clerical workers	24	\$2.75 to \$5.00 a day	48	
Machinery attendants and operators	147	\$2.00 to \$3.00 a day	48	
Labourers handling lumber	287	\$1.30 to \$1.50 a day	48	
	458			
<b>Factories</b>				
<b>Aerated Water</b>				
Male	32	Average wages \$6.00 a week	45	
Female	31	Average wages \$4.00 a week	45	
<b>Cigarette</b>				
Male	7	Average wages \$8.00 a week	45	
Female	14	Average wages \$7.00 a week	45	
<b>Canning grape-fruit juice</b>				
Male	68	\$1.20 to \$3.00 a day	48	
Female	64	80 cents to \$1.20 a day	48	

Industry or Occupation	Number employed	Wages or earnings	Approximate average house per week	Remarks
Soap    Male	9	Average wages \$9.00 per week	45	During crop.
Female	1	Average wages \$8.00 per week	45	
Sugar    Male	154	\$1.50 to \$2.75 per day	72	
	480			
<i>Boat Building and Repairing</i> Ship Carpenters	76	35 cents to 47 cents per hour	48	

### Cost of Living

From a survey held by the Labour Department in 1942 embracing 100 working class families in Belize it was found that the average amounts paid out weekly under the main groups of household expenditure were as follows :

Food .. .. .	\$7.00
Clothing .. .. .	1.37
Rent .. .. .	1.20
Fuel, Light and Washing .. .. .	0.98
Other Items .. .. .	2.30
	<hr/>
	\$12.95

Price levels at the time of the survey were 34.7 above pre-war conditions and as the index figure had risen to 206 by the end of 1947 the cost of maintaining unchanged the 1942 standards of living would then have been approximately \$26.66.

The trend of the cost of living in 1947 is shown by the index figures hereunder:

1st January .. .. .	197
1st April .. .. .	203
1st July .. .. .	206
1st October .. .. .	206

No accurate records are available as to the cost of living for Europeans but the rates for hotels and boarding houses vary from \$3.00 to \$4.00 a day, and from \$80.00 to \$100.00 a month.

### LABOUR ORGANIZATION

#### *Size and Work of the Labour Department*

The Labour Department was established in 1939 with duties following

closely those of other colonies. The staff during 1947 consisted of the Labour Officer, one Second Class Clerk and an office messenger. A Labour Inspector was appointed on the 22nd March, 1947, to assist the Labour Officer in carrying out inspections and other work of the department.

### *Trade Unions*

At the close of 1947 there were three registered trade unions: their memberships were reported to be as follows:—

(a) The British Honduras General Workers Union, a general union comprising all classes of workers formed in 1939, including domestic servants, with a total membership (including three branches in the Districts) of 2,242;

(b) The Carpenters, Cabinet Makers and Painters Union which as its name implies, is confined to the groups of workers named. Its membership was reported as 140.

(c) The National Labour Union, formed on the 26th July, 1947, whose membership is confined to labourers only and excludes other classes of workers unless they are unable to obtain membership with any of the other registered trade unions. Their membership was stated to be 64 on the 31st December.

No associations of employers have yet been formed.

### *Labour Disputes*

In consequence of a wages dispute between the workers at the Belize Sawmill, who were represented by the British Honduras General Workers Union, and the management a strike began on the 1st February. The provisions of the Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance, 1939, were invoked and the men resumed work on 17th February following the appointment of an arbitrator. 252 workers were involved and 3,024 man-days of employment were lost. The award afforded the men substantial increases of pay with retrospective effect from the 15th January.

90 factory workers employed at the Corozal Sugar Factory in the Northern District struck work on the 8th April and presented demands for increases in their pay varying from 70 to 100 per cent. Through the mediation of the Labour Officer work was resumed the following day and the men were granted increases averaging 25 per cent. 135 man-days of employment were lost.

On the 10th June 55 dock labourers refused to continue working after hours unless certain demands for increased overtime were met. The claims were refused and new labour engaged the following day. As in the case of the strike at the Corozal Sugar Factory none of the men involved in this stoppage of work were members of any trade union.

### *Labour Legislation*

The relations between master and servant are controlled by the Employers and Workers Ordinance, No. 6 of 1943, which repealed and replaced previous legislation dating as far back as 1883.

A system of workmen's compensation for accidents sustained during the

course of their employment was established in 1943. It follows closely the system in other West Indian colonies. Agricultural workers are included in its scope and insurance is available from various firms operating in the Colony.

The Factories Ordinance, No. 9 of 1942, provides for the maintenance of machinery safeguards and for the regulation of the conditions of employment in factories.

The establishment and registration of Trade Unions is governed by the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, whilst the settlement of trade disputes may be effected by arbitration under the Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance, 1939, when voluntary means fail.

Other ordinances in force govern the practices of recruiting, provide for the fixing of minimum wages, and regulate the employment of women, young persons and children.

There is no legislation to provide for old age pensions, or for relief in cases of sickness. The indigent receive outdoor relief from a charity vote which is administered by the Outdoor Relief Committee and the sick are given free treatment at Government hospitals if they are found to be destitute.

### *Labour Legislation*

The only changes of significance were two amendments to the Trades Union Ordinance (No. 1 of 1941) dealing with "injury" and "intimidation" so as to bring the local law into conformity with the law in the United Kingdom as it now stands following the repeal of the Trades Dispute and Trade Unions Act, 1927.

## **Chapter III: Public Finance and Taxation**

### REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Throughout the war years, it was not found possible to meet Government Expenditure, which increased steadily, year by year, entirely from Revenue raised within the Colony, notwithstanding the considerable expansion which took place in Customs Duties and Income Tax. The resultant annual deficit was met by a grant-in-aid from His Majesty's Treasury, except in 1947 when it was not required.

#### 1. Accounts for the Calendar Year 1947

The surplus brought forward from 1946 amounted to \$222,090, which did not include \$29,480 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. True revenue for 1947 is shown at \$2,505,798, while true expenditure is given as \$2,476,584. The surplus at the end of December 1947 was \$253,263 which did not include \$27,162 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. No grant-in-aid was drawn from His Majesty's Exchequer during the year 1947.

*Revenue*

The total true revenue of the Colony rose from \$1,924,171 in 1945 to \$2,505,798 in 1947, the figure for 1946 being \$2,206,218. Comparative figures for three years are shown below under the principal heads.

	1945	1946	1947
	\$	\$	\$
Customs, including Surtaxes ..	884,007	920,440	1,227,026
Internal Taxation .. ..	479,070	579,180	639,150
Revenue of Government Property	98,202	106,509	190,670
Fees of Court or Office, etc. ..	108,432	232,552	134,036
Self-balancing Revenue (Posts & Telegraphs, Telephones, Electric Power) .. ..	231,130	251,605	225,995
Interest and Sinking Fund of repayments .. ..	84,171	73,414	61,086
Miscellaneous .. ..	39,159	40,113	27,835
<b>True Revenue ..</b>	<b>1,924,171</b>	<b>*2,203,813</b>	<b>2,505,798</b>

*Receipts from Imperial Funds*

Colonial Development & Welfare	412,459	352,399	435,360
Grant-in-aid .. ..	169,260	80,600	—
<b>Total Revenue ..</b>	<b>2,505,890</b>	<b>2,636,812</b>	<b>2,941,158</b>

The Internal Taxation increases were largely due to the growing yield from income tax, which in 1945 was \$186,364, in 1946 \$260,458 and in 1947 \$346,818.

*Expenditure*

The comparative figures shown below have been classified under main heads.

	1945	1946	1947
	\$	\$	\$
Administration .. ..	946,884	985,555	1,281,360
Social Services (Education, Health, Prisons, etc.) .. ..	395,325	401,118	476,028
Subventions (including price stabilization) .. ..	131,923	194,501	35,322
Public Debt .. ..	166,784	164,558	163,579
Public Works Improvements ..	268,328	168,199	153,765
Self-balancing Expenditure (Posts, Telegraphs, Telephones and Electric Power) .. ..	154,339	168,482	244,206

\*Provisional figures. Actual \$2,206,218.



Expenditure on Colonial Development & Welfare Schemes	371,940	356,845	433,401
Production (Agriculture & Forestry) .. .. .	94,181	110,350	122,324
	<u>2,529,704</u>	<u>2,549,608</u>	<u>2,909,985</u>

Administration includes expenditure on Justice, Police, Pensions, Defence and some minor branches of Government work. The large increase in the expenditure on this head between 1944 and 1947 is explained by the grant of Cost of Living Bonuses to supplement salaries.

## 2. Public Debt

The outstanding debt of the Colony at the 31st December, 1947, amounted to \$1,653,025, of which sum \$96,500 was in respect of borrowings made locally. Sinking funds in hand amounted to \$310,440, thus giving a figure of \$1,342,585 as the net outstanding debt. The total interest being paid on the loans outstanding represents a rate of 4.3 per centum per annum. Of the total amount owing, the sum of \$452,619 is outstanding to the Imperial Treasury, being the balance of loans made in 1932 for reconstruction and development work following the hurricane in 1931. Loan charges, which in 1947 amounted to \$163,579, representing 5.6 per cent of the total expenditure, constitute a not inconsiderable burden on the revenues of the Colony.

## 3. Assets and Liabilities

A statement of the Assets and Liabilities of the Colony as at 31st December, 1947, shows Assets divisible as follows:

	\$
Cash .. .. .	339,577
Investments of Various Funds .. ..	1,778,747
Advances to official and public organizations	165,858
	<u>\$2,284,182</u>

Liabilities may be classified briefly as shown below:

	\$
Unexpended balances of loans .. ..	3,342
Deposits—Fund balances, etc. .. ..	2,025,751
Drafts .. .. .	1,826
Surplus .. .. .	253,263
	<u>\$2,284,182</u>

In addition, the following information must be given to present a true account:

	\$
Public Debt of the Colony .. .. .	1,653,025
Less accumulated Sinking Fund in hand ..	310,440
	<hr/>
	1,342,585
Loan Investments .. .. .	606,434
	<hr/>

The sum of \$27,162 was also due to the Colony on account of expenditure on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes.

#### 4. Description of the Main Heads of Taxation

The main heads and their yield in revenue are set out below:

	1945	*1946	1947
	\$	\$	\$
<i>Customs</i>			
Import Duties .. .. .	745,676	766,845	1,042,246
Export Duties .. .. .	75,360	90,670	117,195
Package Tax .. .. .	51,491	50,936	53,435
Harbour Dues, etc. .. .. .	11,480	11,995	14,150
<i>Internal Taxation, etc.</i>			
Excise Duties .. .. .	195,363	220,031	186,862
Income Tax .. .. .	186,364	260,458	346,818
Land Tax .. .. .	37,476	40,242	39,653
Estate Duty .. .. .	8,618	5,729	3,311
Licences, Banks & Fire Insurance Companies .. .. .	1,411	1,376	1,443
Other Licences:			
Motor Vehicles, etc. .. .. .	16,113	18,063	19,933
Fines of Court .. .. .	11,783	11,763	17,385
Fees of Court and Stamp Duties	12,188	19,020	14,750
Warehouse Rents .. .. .	34,768	32,547	37,886

*Import Duties.* The tariff of import duties is largely *ad valorem* with a general duty of 25 per centum and a preferential rate of 12½ per centum. Specific duties are levied on wines, certain defined spirits and tobacco and cigarettes. Equipment for agricultural and forestry operations is admitted free of duty.

*Export Duties* are levied upon chicle, coconuts, mahogany, cedar and pine.

*Package Tax.* This is a tax of 15 cents on every package passing through the Customs Department.

*Excise Duty* is imposed on locally produced rum at the rate of \$4.50 per proof gallon if intended for consumption within the Colony. There is also a small duty on tobacco, cigars and cigarettes.

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\*Provisional figures for 1946.

*Land Tax.* A tax is levied on all lands at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents an acre.

*Income Tax.* Increased rates of tax were imposed during 1946 providing for a levy on the chargeable income of any person at the rate of 5 per centum of the first \$1,000 increasing by a sliding scale up to 40 per centum on that part of incomes in excess of \$35,000. A surtax on a sliding scale is also levied on chargeable income in excess of \$4,000 being 10 per centum on the first \$5,000, 15 per centum on the next \$6,000 and 20 per centum on the remainder. Company Tax is at the rate of 30 cents on every dollar of chargeable income of a Company.

*Licences, Banks and Fire Insurance Companies.* Any establishment carrying on the business of banking pays an annual licence fee of \$500, and Fire Insurance Companies pay a licence fee at the rate of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per centum on gross premiums with a minimum fee of 25 dollars.

*Estate Duty.* Duty is chargeable on estates over \$100 based on a scale which is \$1.00 per centum on estates up to \$500 increasing to \$15.00 per centum on estates over \$50,000.

*Licences—Motor Vehicles.* An annual duty is payable on all motor vehicles varying according to the weight of the vehicle, its classification, and the purpose it serves.

*Stamp Duties.* The chief features are impositions of 3 cents on cheques, receipts and bills of exchange with 10 cents for every \$100 on promissory notes. On transfers of property and mortgages the rates are 25 and 10 cents respectively for every \$50.00 or part thereof.

*Warehouse Rents.* A charge is made on merchandise which is deposited in bond, usually for re-export.

## 5. Customs Tariff

Broadly, the Customs Schedule of Duties may be described as a two-part *ad valorem* tariff on C.I.F. prices with specific duties on a few selected articles. Under the general tariff, the majority of the small and general importations subject to *ad valorem* duties bear a 25 per cent imposition; under the preferential tariff the duty is one of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

As a consequence of an Ordinance passed in 1939 to impose as a wartime measure a surtax on certain Customs duties, the duty on a number of articles, the chief of which were bicycles, clocks, watches, hosiery, wines and spirits, cigarettes and sugar, was increased by 25 per centum; the duty on a few other articles was increased on a specific basis.

Equipment, such as trucks, tractors, carts, wagons and agricultural implements, imported to aid in agriculture or in forestry operations, is admitted free. Machinery for agricultural purposes, sugar manufacturing, marine purposes, and printing, together with sewing machines, are free under the Preferential Tariff and bear only a five per cent impost under the General Tariff.

Specific duties, with some qualifications, are levied on importations of cattle, on certain manufactured articles such as bicycles, boots and shoes, fuel oils and petroleum, on the chief items of food and on wines, spirits and tobacco.

Some imports, the principal of which are clocks, jewellery, cutlery, plated goods and jams, etc., bear a thirty per cent levy on the General Tariff and fifteen per cent on the Preferential.

## 6. Excise

Excise Duties are confined to rum and tobacco, the rate on the former being \$4.50 per gallon if not exceeding the strength of proof and \$4.50 per proof gallon. The rates on tobacco, as increased by a war surtax, are now

- (a) cigars, weighing not more than 5 lb. per 1,000 20 cents per 100  
weighing over 5 lb. per 1,000 .. .. . 50 cents per 100
- (b) cigarettes weighing not more than 3 lb. per  
1,000 .. .. . 10 cents per 100  
weighing over 3 lb. per 1,000 .. .. . 20 cents per 100
- (c) manufactured .. .. . 40 cents per lb.

*Stamp Duties.* The main features have been described elsewhere in this chapter. Some specific rates are given below:

	\$
Affidavits and Declarations .. .. .	.50
Agreements: if not under seal .. .. .	.10
if under seal .. .. .	2.50
Bills of Exchange payable on demand or at sight or on presentation or within three days after date or sight .. .. .	.03
Bill of Lading for export of goods .. .. .	.10
Bonds: For every \$50 or part of \$50 of the amount of the penalty .. .. .	.10
To a maximum .. .. .	2.50
Deeds not charged with <i>ad valorem</i> duty .. .. .	2.50
Leases, Tenancy Agreements for definite terms not exceeding a year:	
For a dwelling house rent less than \$96 p.a. .. .. .	.02
In other cases: if not under seal .. .. .	.10
if under seal .. .. .	2.50
Passports .. .. .	2.50
Renewal fee for each year .. .. .	.25
Share Warrants to bearer by a Company Registered in the Colony \$50 or part of \$50 of nominal value .. .. .	.75

## 7. Income Tax

Income Tax on individuals was payable at the following rates:

	\$			
On the first	1,000	of Chargeable Income	5%	
„ next	500	„ „	6%	
„ „	500	„ „	7%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	8%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	9%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	10%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	12½%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	15 %	
„ „	1,000	„ „	17½%	
„ „	1,000	„ „	20 %	
„ „	1,000	„ „	22½%	
„ „	5,000	„ „	25 %	
„ „	20,000	„ „	30 %	
On all amounts above \$35,000		„ „	40 %	

The rates of Surtax on Individuals were

On the first \$5,000 in excess of \$4,000 of Chargeable Income 10%

On the next \$6,000 .. .. . 15%

On the remainder .. .. . 20%

The tax on Companies was 30%.

### *Incidence of Income Tax*

#### **Tax Payable**

Gross Income	Single Person	Married Man	Married man with one child	Married Man with two children
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1,000	20.00	7.50	1.25	—
1,500	42.50	30.00	23.75	17.50
2,000	68.00	53.00	46.25	40.00
3,000	131.00	111.50	102.75	94.00
4,000	204.00	183.00	173.00	163.00
5,000	285.00	262.50	251.25	240.00
6,000	485.00	435.00	410.00	385.00
7,000	710.00	653.75	625.62	597.00
8,000	960.00	897.50	866.25	835.00
9,000	1,235.00	1,166.25	1,131.87	1,097.00
10,000	1,535.00	1,460.00	1,422.50	1,385.00
15,000	3,510.00	3,410.00	3,360.00	3,310.00
20,000	5,910.00	5,785.00	5,722.50	5,660.00
35,000	13,410.00	13,285.00	13,222.50	13,160.00

Deductions allowed against gross income are:

Personal allowance	.. .. .	\$500
Wife	.. .. .	\$250
Each child	.. .. .	\$125
Earned Income 1/10 of gross income up to	..	\$500

### 8. Estate Duty

Under the provisions of an Ordinance in 1927, Estate Duty is payable according to a general scale as follows:

Where the principal value of the estate

Exceeds	\$		\$	Duty to be payable at	\$
	100 but does not exceed		500		1.00%
"	500	"	2,000	"	1.50%
"	2,000	"	4,000	"	2.00%
"	4,000	"	6,000	"	3.00%
"	6,000	"	10,000	"	3.50%
"	10,000	"	15,000	"	4.50%
"	15,000	"	20,000	"	5.50%
"	20,000	"	25,000	"	6.50%
"	25,000	"	30,000	"	8.00%
"	30,000	"	50,000	"	10.00%
"	50,000	"	—	"	15.00%

## Chapter IV: Currency and Banking

### CURRENCY

#### *Standard and Legal Tender*

The standard of currency is the British Honduras dollar which is of the equivalent value of the dollar of the United States of America. Currency notes in denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, and \$10 issued by the Currency Commissioners are legal tender up to any amount. Subsidiary silver currency is legal tender in payment of any amount not exceeding ten dollars but coins of bronze nickel or mixed metal in five cent or one cent pieces are legal tender up to fifty cents only.

#### *Circulation*

The note circulation of the Colony, which stood at \$283,536 at the 31st December, 1939, expanded to \$811,398 at the end of 1947. The figures for each denomination were as follows:

	<i>Number of Notes</i>	<i>Amount \$</i>	
\$1	85,782	85,782	
\$2	41,748	83,496	
\$5	90,956	454,780	
\$10	18,734	187,340	
		<hr/>	\$811,398

This figure represented an increase of \$1,510 over the quantity in circulation a year before. The reserve of notes, at the commencement of the year was \$265,000. In December 1947 new notes to the value of \$1,050,000 were received, making the total stock \$1,315,000. The issues amounted to \$99,000, leaving a balance on hand at 31st December of \$1,216,000.

### *Subsidiary Currency*

Coins issued by the Colonial Government are as follows:

<i>Silver</i>		\$
50 cent pieces.. ..	69,952	
25 „ „ .. ..	49,389	
10 „ „ .. ..	25,739	
5 „ „ .. ..	5,546	
<i>Mixed metal (nickel, bronze, etc.)</i>		
5 cent pieces.. ..	18,003	
1 „ „ (bronze)	12,054	
		<hr/> \$180,683

Of this figure of \$180,683, a sum of \$50,000 in fifty and twenty-five cent pieces was held in 1946 at a specie value of \$15,000. During 1947 these coins were sent to the Royal Mint for disposal as bullion. The amount realized was \$15,248 above their book value.

### BANKING

There is only one banking establishment in the Colony, that of the Royal Bank of Canada in Belize which was established in 1912 when the Bank of British Honduras was purchased. The Bank provides all the usual banking services.

The Government Savings Bank, operating from the Treasury in Belize, with a branch in the administrative centre of each district, increased its deposits from \$410,632 at the 1st January, 1939, to \$1,739,712 at the end of 1947. The deposits during 1947, decreased by \$3,738 as compared with the figures of the previous year. Account holders numbered 7,348 with an average holding of \$236.

## Chapter V: Commerce

### EXPORTS

The Colony's chief exports are mahogany and cedar logs, mahogany cedar and pine lumber, bananas, and citrus fruits, and re-exports of manufactured articles.

The total exports for the year 1947 amounted to \$6,142,601 as compared to \$5,222,028. Grapefruit Juice to the value of \$416,904 was exported during 1947 as against 1946 figures which were \$339,812. The exports of chicle gums were \$1,669,674, which represented an increase of \$725,492 over the figures of 1946. There has been a gradual annual increase of the exports of

pine lumber and mahogany lumber. The exports of pine lumber amounted to \$156,911 in 1947 and mahogany lumber \$1,089,784. The exports of mahogany logs, which went principally to the United States of America amounted to \$1,522,009. Coconuts exported amounted to 155,438 which showed a decrease of \$49,160 as compared with the 1946 figures.

#### IMPORTS

Imports showed an increase of \$1,873,736 compared with the previous year's figure of \$6,782,516, this is due principally to the high cost of merchandise. Mahogany logs imported into the Colony did not play a major part in the imports of 1947; the imports being in 1947 \$548,090, this however showed an increase over that of 1946, which was only \$41,679. The imports of rice during the current year amounted to 22,293 cwt. at a value of \$217,506; 1946 imports were 30,587 cwt. costing \$292,764. 36,868 bags of flour (196 lb.) cost \$510,051 in 1947 while 49,760 cost \$341,148 in 1946. The imports of motor cars and trucks and jeeps were 125 units to the value of \$218,751, while the previous year's imports were 118 vehicles valuing \$261,644. The value of imports of Cotton Piece Goods showed an increase of \$231,104 over the 1946 imports of \$308,193. Chicle gums imported for re-exports were valued at \$358,532, being an increase of only \$5,764 over 1946 imports.

## Chapter VI: Production

#### AGRICULTURE

The Director of Agriculture was on leave pending retirement. A new Director was appointed in October. A Veterinary Officer was appointed in May. Other staff consisted of two Assistant Agricultural Officers, one Agricultural Instructor, one Junior Agricultural Instructor, two Senior Farm Demonstrators and eight Farm Demonstrators. In addition a number of temporary Farm Demonstrators were employed under a Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme for increased food production.

#### *Crop Production.*

The prolonged drought in the first six months of the year made planting of the principal grain crops difficult. Conditions during the second half of the year were favourable to crop production and harvesting. Accurate estimates of yields were difficult as the greater part of the principal agricultural crops were grown for home consumption and only a small fraction offered for sale. Observations in the field indicated a yield slightly above the average for most crops.

Approximate estimates of acreages and yields were:—

Maize (corn)	.. ..	12,450 acres yielding	1,200 lb. per acre
Rice (paddy)	.. ..	2,460 " "	1,000 " "
Beans (various)	.. ..	800 " "	250 " "
Root Crops (yams, cassava, tannia)	.. ..	2,000 acres yielding	2,500 lb. per acre



Plantains and bananas ..	3,300 acres	—
Coconuts .. ..	6,550 „	yielding 3,000 nuts per acre
Citrus ' .. ..	1,700 „	yield of grapefruit 120 boxes of 90 lb. each per acre.
Sugar-cane .. ..	1,750 „	yielding 13 tons cane per acre

### *Livestock Production*

The long drought adversely affected the development of much of the livestock which was raised on grass almost entirely. With the drying up of pastures the livestock rapidly lost condition and did not recover satisfactorily until late in the year.

Approximate estimates for the various types of livestock were:—

Cattle (milk, beef and draught) .. ..	16,650
Pigs .. ..	11,300
Horses, Mules and Donkeys .. ..	4,200
Sheep .. ..	1,330
Goats .. ..	450
Poultry (chickens, turkeys, ducks) ..	68,700

During the year the development of roads to the west and north of the Colony materially improved supplies of all animal produce coming into Belize.

### *Organization and Destination of Production*

*Grain Crops.* The maize crop was produced principally in the Northern District. The rice crop was grown in the Toledo and Belize Districts. In both instances the greater part of the crop was consumed by the growers and only what was surplus to domestic requirements was sold.

*Beans.* Beans similarly were grown almost entirely to meet the domestic requirements of the peasant growers.

*Coconuts.* Production was principally by the small grower. During the year, 3,394,000 nuts valued at \$155,438 were exported almost entirely to the U. S. A. The remainder of the production was used locally for oil manufacture.

*Citrus.* Production for export was largely in the hands of a few large estate owners. An association of growers existed which provided for the sale to the juicing plant of the small producers' crop in the Stann Creek District. Exports were principally of juice which amounted to just under 6,000,000 lb. valued at \$416,900. In 1947 exports were almost entirely to the United Kingdom.

*Sugar Cane.* The industry was largely in the hands of the small grower. The only factory making white sugar is in the Northern District. This contracted to purchase most of its requirements of cane from the neighbouring small growers.

Production was below the requirements of the Colony. Production in 1947 amounted to 1,239 tons.

### Marketing

The Board of Agriculture guaranteed minimum prices for produce such as corn, rice and beans which growers found surplus to their requirements and the restricted local markets for such produce. This policy was successful in encouraging the production of increased quantities of these crops. Unfortunately the prices offered by the Board of Agriculture tended to be regarded as the fixed price for each of these products.

### FISHERIES

There is no Fisheries Department. Fishing in the Colony engages about 125 fishing doreys and smacks of a length varying from fifteen feet to thirty-five feet and averaging from half a ton to ten tons each, with an aggregate of 150 tons

During the past year quite a large amount of lobsters and fish has been exported to the U. S. A. and Guatemala by air, by a few independent exporters and by two American companies, during the open seasons. There is one U.S. owned trawler with deep-freeze refrigeration storage, which fishes in the Colony's waters under licence of the Government and takes lobster tails and a variety of frozen fish to Miami, Fla.

### FORESTRY

The principal forest products are:

- (a) Mahogany logs and lumber
- (b) Cedar logs and lumber
- (c) Pine lumber
- (d) Secondary hardwood logs and lumber
- (e) Rosewood sold by the ton
- (f) Chicle and Crown gum
- (g) Cohune kernels
- (h) Firewood and charcoal
- (i) Alligator skins

The total area of forest lands in the Colony is 8,337 square miles or 93.9 per cent of the total area. It consists of the following types:

I	Mangrove forests	.. .. .	approximately	2.8%
II	Savannahs			
	(a) Brackish water)			
	(b) Fresh water )	Wet Savannahs	„	2.7%
	(c) Inland	Pine forest		
III	Pine forest	Dry Savannahs	„	15.4%
IV	High rain forest			
	1. Swamp forest	.. .. .	„	2.3%
	2. Intermediate forest	.. .. .	„	17.9%
	3. Mountain forest)			
	4. Advanced forest)			
	) Advanced forest	„		51.9%
V	Secondary rain forest)			
	(i) High forest )			

(ii) Existing and recently abandoned				
cultivation .. .. .			„	7.0%
Total land area of mainland				100.0%

Mahogany logs may be cut from overmature trees in virgin forests far inland or from smaller trees which have reached the required size in cut over forests nearer the coast. They are hauled by caterpillar tractor to a main road where they are loaded on pneumatic-tyred tractors with long trailers capable of taking three or four whole trees containing 5,000 board feet at once. These transport them to a floatable river or the coast, after which they are floated to the sawmills of Belize or the ship's side if for export. Pine is seldom exported as a log. It is cut in the forest by smaller mills and the lumber is sent in lighters to the boat or market. There is a considerable local market for pine, both rough and dressed, as almost all houses are of wood.

Chicle is the base of chewing gum. Crown gum is another product obtained by tapping trees of the family Sapotaceae. It is mixed with chicle to produce chewing gum of a somewhat inferior type. They are both produced in the rains by chicleros and transported, after coagulation into blocks, on mule-back to the main rivers or the coast. Chicleros are individual contractors who produce from 500 to 2,000 lb. of chicle a season. They are licensed individually but agree to sell all their output at a stated price to a chicle contractor who has obtained permission to work the forest and who is responsible for the royalties. In 1947, 634 tons of domestic origin valued at \$1,311,080 were exported. There was a drop in the price paid for chicle and Crown gum after July 1947 owing to the competition of cheaper jetulong from Malaya.

Unlike 1946, the value and volume of mahogany logs and lumber cut within the Colony exceeded the value and volume of logs passing through the Colony from Peten and Mexico. The total export of Colony mahogany amounted to 810,100 cu. ft. valued at \$1,882,638.

The increase in the cutting of secondary hardwoods, notably Santa Maria continued and five new sawmills intended mainly for the pine lumber industry were installed. These led to an increase in pine lumber exports at the end of the year.

This increase interest in pine has made it necessary to take steps to regenerate pine forest cut over by ensuring the retention of parent seed trees and fire protection of cut over areas. By means of a jeep and fireline ploughs 12,465 acres of pine forest were subdivided by fire traces into 311 acre blocks. In addition 109 acres were planted with pine.

The drain on mahogany resources was partly made good by the planting of 55 acres with mahogany. The rest of the mahogany forest was policed to prevent the removal of trees smaller than the minimum girth limit. Food crops are grown as a sideline in mahogany and pine plantations. Receipts from the sale of food in 1947 amounted to \$1,885.

# Chapter VII: Social Services

## EDUCATION

The system of primary education is that of subsidized denominational schools and is controlled by a Board of Education appointed under the Education Ordinance, 1926 (No. 14 of 1926). The Governor is President of the Board, while the Director of Education acts as Secretary. A representative of the teachers is included among its members.

There are seventy-eight primary schools, three of which are conducted by the Government. There are also some thirty-three unaided primary schools, both denominational and private. All primary schools are co-educational, with the exception of four in Belize. The ages of enrolment for the purposes of grants-in-aid are five to sixteen.

The school buildings in the Northern and in the Toledo and Stann Creek Districts suffered greatly by hurricane in October, 1942, and October, 1945, respectively. Twenty-eight buildings were destroyed or damaged in the Northern District and fourteen in the Toledo and Stann Creek Districts. Thus far thirteen buildings have been rebuilt with assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. These buildings, which are mostly of stone or concrete, are in many respects ideal rural school buildings.

Secondary education is entirely in the hands of the denominations, but the Government assists by providing sixty-five scholarships for pupils from primary schools, each scholarship being tenable for four years though it may be extended for a fifth year with the approval of the Board of Education. There are five secondary schools, three of which are for boys. All except one have preparatory departments. Teachers are mostly recruited from abroad. The age-range of pupils receiving secondary education proper is eleven to eighteen. The schools are all situated in Belize.

There is no vocational school, but handicrafts are taught at two schools in Belize, and instruction in domestic science is given to a limited number of girls from the higher standards at one centre in Belize. The teaching of agriculture is encouraged in rural schools by instruction grants to teachers, and by free grants of tools. The industrial school for male juvenile delinquents, which is conducted by the Salvation Army on behalf of the Government, was transferred from Stann Creek to a site near the Airfield, 8 miles from Belize.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen. That the enforcement of compulsion has been a success may be inferred from the fact that the percentage of the average attendance to the enrolment in the Colony is approximately eighty, the highest in the British Caribbean area. Education is not yet free, however, each primary school pupil being expected to pay a fee of 5 cents (3d.) weekly; few in fact do so.

An average of 200 certificated teachers and fifty pupil teachers is employed in the primary schools. The majority of the teachers are untrained, but since 1941 selected teachers have been sent to training colleges in Jamaica, there being twelve such teachers training annually. Fourteen have thus far completed their training and have been posted to schools. Three supervisors,

originally appointed as Jeanes experiment by means of a Carnegie grant, are now permanent officers. They are rendering invaluable service in raising the standard of teaching in the schools.

The position of the teachers has been improved by the approval in 1946 of the granting of assistance towards housing. New and much improved salary scales have now been approved. The British Honduras Teachers' Federation, which was organized in 1939 with constituent associations in all the districts, holds an annual conference and makes recommendations to the Board of Education from time to time.

A revised primary school curriculum was issued in 1945. In its preparation the recommendation of the West India Royal Commission that curricula should be less bookish and more in keeping with the everyday life of the people, was borne in mind. The Board of Education Rules, which are the code of primary education, were revised in 1946; the revision of the Education Ordinance is under consideration.

A Commission appointed to inquire into the state of secondary education reported in July 1947. It recommended the establishment of a "practical" school, and the payment of grant in aid to the secondary schools. In the same month the Educational Adviser to the Comptroller reported on secondary education; the main recommendation was for the establishment of a technical school. Secondary education is carried on in five church schools, without grant-in-aid from Government.

The British Council supplies periodicals to certain schools, primary and secondary. It has also donated books to the Jubilee Library, Belize, to form the nucleus of a Teachers' Reference Library.

Education has benefited from Colonial Development and Welfare schemes under which grants have been approved for the free supply of text-books, stationery and equipment to schools, towards the rehabilitation of some twenty-eight school buildings damaged or destroyed by hurricane in 1942 and towards the holding of annual teachers' vacation courses during the past three years.

The Credit Union Movement continues to grow in strength.

The average enrolment of the recognized primary schools has risen from 9,773 in 1939 to 10,426 in 1947, while the average attendance has risen from 7,773 to 8,671. The average enrolment in the secondary schools is about 589.

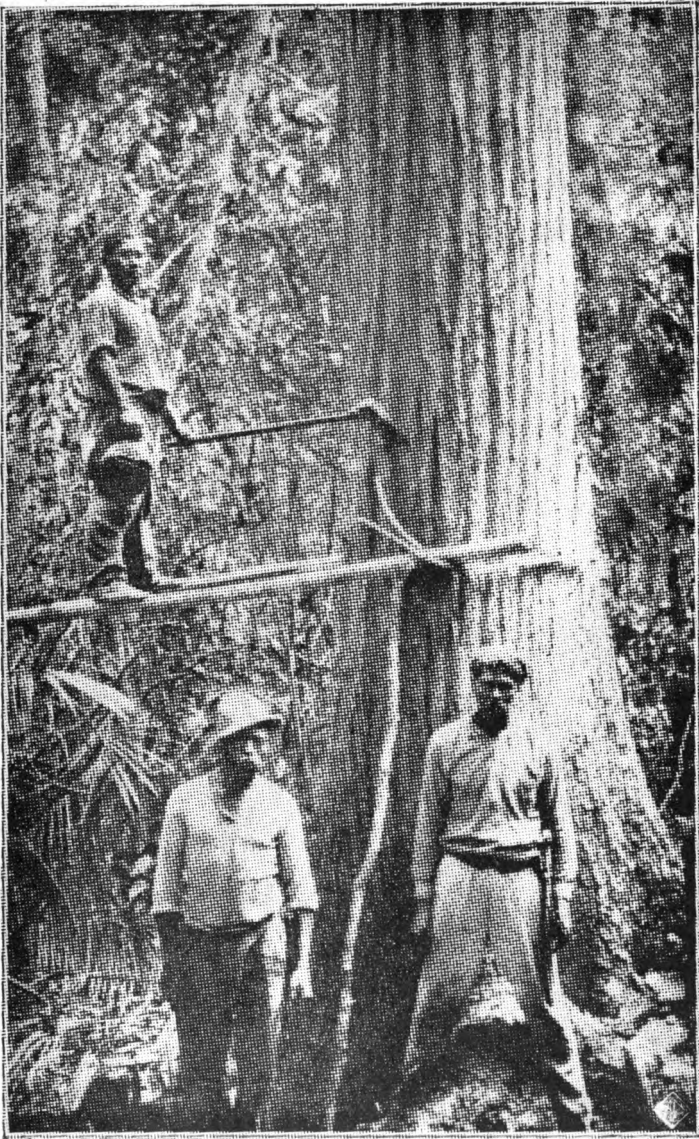
The total provision from the revenue of the Colony, excluding War Bonus, was \$93,349 (£19,208) in 1939 and \$149,845 (£37,183) in 1947. The actual expenditure on education from revenue of the Colony was \$201,165 (£49,917).

#### HEALTH

The analysis of the mortality rate is done by the Registrar-General. The figures are not available.

##### *Malaria*

This disease still continues to hold first place in the causes of morbidity. 1010 cases were treated in the various hospitals throughout the colony, representing 20 % of the total hospital admissions.



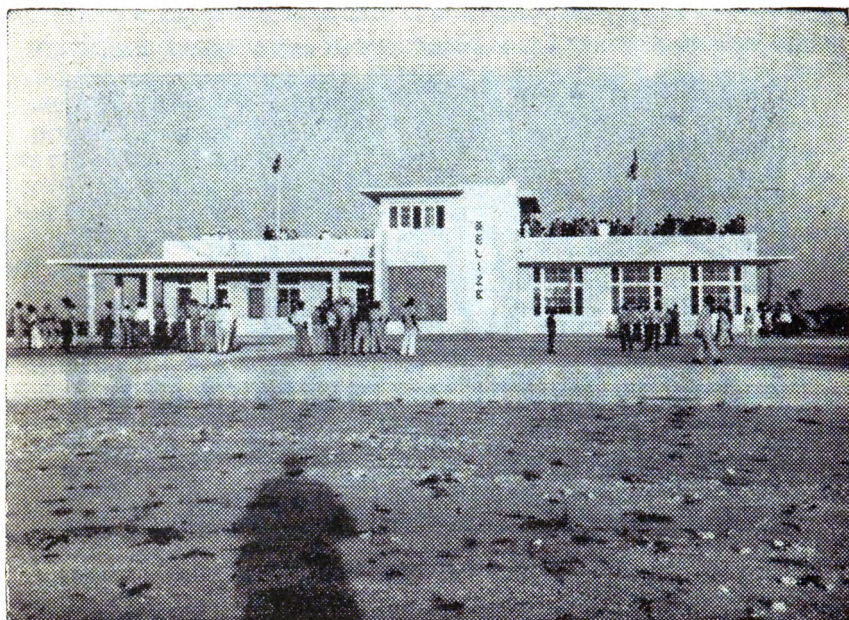
*Felling a giant mahogany*



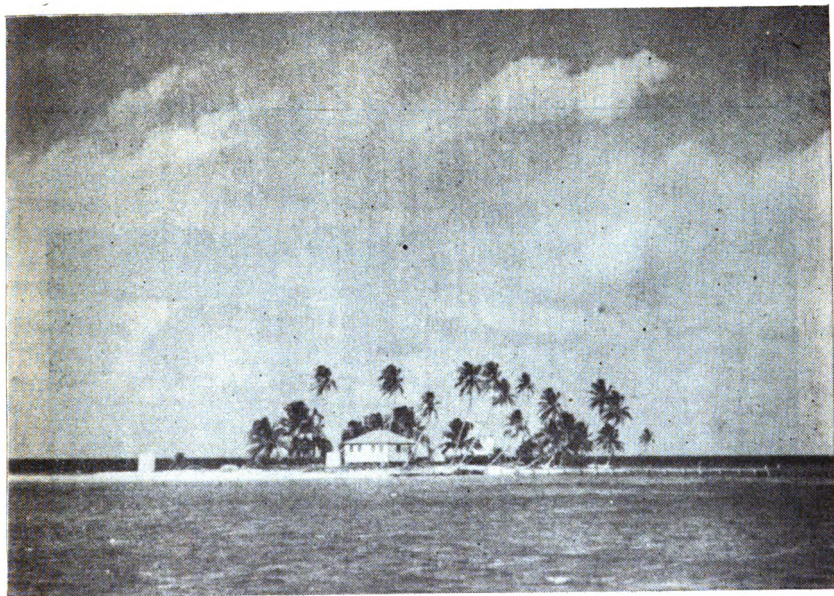


*Mahogany logs in boom—Belize River*





*The Airport—Belize*

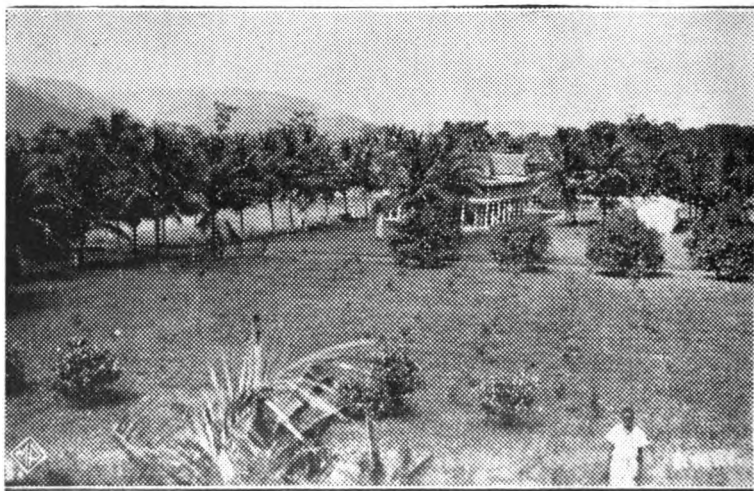


*Sergeant's Caye*





*The Court House—Belize*



*Stann Creek Valley*

The Indian villages of San Pedro, Columbia and San Antonio were subjected to an intensive programme of Malaria control involving the use of the newer synthetic antimalarial drugs and residual spraying of huts with D.D.T. A preliminary survey of the splenic indices in December 1946 showed an index of 33-1.3 % in San Antonio and 54 % in San Pedro Columbia. In December 1947 the indices were 27 and 49 % respectively. The beneficial effects of these measures, however, are reflected with greater fidelity in the vital statistics of these villages than in the splenic indices, as shown below in the following table:—

## BIRTHS AND DEATHS

	San Antonio			San Pedro Columbia		
	Births	Deaths	Balance	Births	Deaths	Balance
1945	38	66	28	12	30	18
1946	24	36	12	18	30	12
1947	71	39	42	19	20	1

The complete reversal of the statistical trend in the population of these two villages bears eloquent testimony not only to the role played by Malaria in inhibiting the natural increase of the Indian population, but also to the effectiveness of simple and comparatively inexpensive antimalarial measures intensively and consistently applied.

*Typhoid Fever*

61 cases were reported. This is the highest incidence of the disease in any year so far.

*Tuberculosis*

74 cases were notified. The mortality from this disease maintains a fairly constant ratio (1:2) to the reported cases. This is probably due to the fact that many tuberculous cases retire to rural districts, where their deaths are not certified by medical practitioners.

*Venereal Diseases*

There were 6,471 attendances at the Venereal Diseases Clinic of the Belize Hospital. The Laboratory examined 2,943 bloods by the Kahn and Hinton reactions for Syphilis; 800 were positive.

There has been a significant decline in the incidence of the late complications of Gonorrhoea, which formerly contributed a large share to the surgical emergencies of the Hospital.

*Medical Staff*

The establishment consists of a Senior Medical Officer, eight Medical Officers, a Matron, and a Nursing Sister. Other hospital staff consists of a Head Dispenser with two qualified assistants, and three apprentices, and two labor-

atory technicians. The nursing staff consists of thirteen staff nurses, and sixty-nine nurses including nurses in training. The Health Staff includes eleven sanitary inspectors, an Inspector of Midwives, six rural nurses and four District Nurses.

### *Hospitals*

There are six hospitals in the Colony, one for each district, with a total of 162 beds, twenty-two of which are in the maternity wards. The fees range from twenty-five cents a day for fourth-class patients to \$3.00 a day for the first-class, but no charge is made for the poor and indigent. Admissions to the Belize Hospital during 1946 numbered 2,658, and to District Hospitals 2,320. The Out-patients Department of Belize Hospital recorded 3,616 attendances including those who attended as ambulatory cases of illness, and also the various clinics including the Dental Clinic, casualty dressing and minor operations.

### *Sanitary Organization*

Sanitary Inspectors are in charge of the scavenging of the City; they are responsible for the inspection of all receptacles for the collection of water and for the rigid enforcement of the by-laws governing bakeries, restaurants, hotels and slaughter houses. Each year for the past four years, a Sanitary Inspector has been sent to the Hygiene Institute, Kingston, Jamaica, for training.

The sea and the canals which run through the town of Belize provide the only means for a majority of the householders to dispose of their night soil. Disagreeable and unsightly as it may seem, there can be little doubt that it is the best expedient which could be adopted. Methods of disposal of night soil in the country villages are faulty.

## HOUSING

In Belize, the population live in houses constructed of timber with galvanized iron roofs, standing usually on wooden piles about seven feet above the level of the ground, which is often swampy and flooded. The work of filling in plots with pipeshank from the sea bed is constantly being undertaken by private individuals and the City Council, while reclamation schemes have, from time to time, been undertaken by the Government. It is not usual to find any ground-floor rooms used for sleeping; their use is normally confined to storage, washing, or for kitchen purposes. Only a small number of the population live in houses which they own.

No improvement has been effected in the housing situation in Belize.

The Central Authority has produced a housing scheme which provides for the complete development of an area at the Newtown Barracks comprising 50 building lots, and for the erection of 14 blocks—each containing four dwellings.

Each dwelling contains the following accommodation:—

Living Room .. ..	120 sq. ft.
Bedroom I .. ..	112 " "
Bedroom II .. ..	80 " "

Kitchen	.. .. .	64 sq. ft.
Ablution	(4 ft. 6 ins. x 6 ft. 8 ins.)	
Veranda	(4 „ 6 „ x 10 „ 4 „ )	
Pit Latrine.		

## SOCIAL WELFARE

During the year 1947 the post of Social Welfare Officer was vacant until the 1st September when Mr. John Thomas was appointed Co-operative and Social Welfare Officer and plans were made for the re-organisation of the Department and application made to the Secretary of State for supplementary grant under Colonial Development and Welfare to continue for another three years.

(a) Through voluntary efforts, Village Councils have been formed at Gales Point, Manatee and at Placentia. Although these have no official status they are assuming an important role in their communities and many improvements have been wrought in both areas through their efforts. This development is of note as they are the nucleus for a wider form of representative local government.

Credit Unions continue to play their part in providing credit for the poorer class especially in the urban areas. During the year under review an Ordinance to regulate Credit Unions was passed by the Legislative Council and a Registrar of Credit Unions appointed.

The Fisherman's Co-operative at Barranco and the Santana Farmers Federation and Co-op store are serving the needs of the members. Several other rival groups are organising themselves with the ultimate aim of becoming a co-operative society.

Handcraft continue to make strides in the Prison, the Poor House and the Pomona Industrial School.

(b) The only form of public assistance available is through the Outdoor Relief Committee, there being no Old Age Pension law. Relief to the aged and destitute is given by weekly allowances, provided from Government funds.

During the year, some 783 persons of whom 583 were resident in Belize received relief amounting to \$29,996.93, not including \$910.20 which was spent to provide an extra treat at Christmas. The almshouse accommodated an average of 58 persons during the year under review, while the Gann House which is a night shelter for homeless men operated by the Salvation Army accommodated 5811 men during the year an average of 494 per month. The upkeep of this institution being met by a grant from Government of \$720 and \$192.79 from the Public Assistance Board and Lodgers fee of \$197.10. Sleeping accommodation is free but a charge of two cents is made for tea in the morning.

The entirely destitute are admitted to the Poor House. The chief Probation Officer is a Salvation Officer for the town of Belize. In the districts there are also persons appointed as members of Probation Committee who take the place of the Officer. The Pomona Industrial School was removed from Stann Creek during the year to a site at the Airport and renamed the Boys

Training School. This is the only institution in the Colony for juvenile delinquents.

Juvenile delinquency is still on the increase. During the year under review, 177 cases were brought before the courts. More than 90% of these offenders were males. There are no children's Courts but the Magistrate Courts are cleared during the hearing of juvenile cases.

The Boys Training School which is the only institution for Juveniles and is managed by the Salvation Army had an average of 57 boys during the year—thirteen of these were admitted after conviction of the courts. The following trades, Agriculture, Carpentry, Tailoring and Handicraft are taught. Recreation includes cricket, football and boxing. When the boys are released from the institution every effort is made to place the boys in suitable employment.

## Chapter VIII: Legislation

### *Credit Unions*

This legislation provides the legal frame-work for the healthy development and maintenance of Credit Unions of which there are a few in the Colony. The Ordinance follows closely the Credit Union Act of the Province of Saskatchewan in the Dominion of Canada.

### *Diplomatic Privileges*

Ordinance No. 11 of 1947 is based on the Diplomatic Privileges (Extension) Act, 1944, (Imperial) as amended in 1946. It makes provision as to the immunities, privileges and capacities of International Organisations of which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and Foreign Governments are members.

The measure is necessary in consequence of a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, first, that provision should be made as to the immunities, privileges and facilities to be enjoyed by the International Court of Justice set up under the Charter of the United Nations and, secondly, that negotiations should be opened with a view to the unification of the immunities and privileges enjoyed by the United Nations and certain other International Organisations.

### *Income Tax*

(i) Ordinance No. 10 of 1947 empowers the Governor in Council to enter into an arrangement with any territory outside the Colony with a view to affording relief from double taxation in relation to income tax and any tax of a similar character imposed by the laws of that territory. The measure also contains detailed rules for allowance of tax credits against income tax; provision for the deduction of tax from dividends of Colonial Companies and for the taxation of foreign income on an 'arising' basis.

(ii) Ordinance No. 21 of 1947 further amends the Income tax law by increasing the deductions allowable in computing the chargeable income of an individual; making provision for the payment of the tax by instalments

and providing that as from the year of assessment 1948 the tax upon the chargeable income of every person other than a company shall be charged at the following rates:—

on the first \$500 chargeable income 5 per centum (with minimum of 50 cents)

on the next	\$500	\$1,000	6 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$1,500	8 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$2,000	10 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$2,500	12½ per centum
on the next	\$500	\$3,000	15 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$3,500	17½ per centum
on the next	\$500	\$4,000	20 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$4,500	20 per centum
on the next	\$500	\$5,000	25 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$6,000	25 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$7,000	25 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$8,000	25 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$9,000	25 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$10,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$11,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$12,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$13,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$14,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$15,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$16,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$17,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$18,000	30 per centum
on the next	\$1,000	\$19,000	30 per centum
on the remainder			35 per centum

(2) in addition to the income tax charged in subsection (1) of this section there shall be charged levied and paid for the year of assessment 1948 and for each year thereafter as additional duty on income (in this Ordinance referred to as a surtax) in respect of the excess over ten thousand dollars of chargeable income at the following rates:—

on the first	\$5,000	10 per centum
on the next	\$5,000	15 per centum
on the remainder		20 per centum

### *Rent Restriction*

Ordinance No. 22 of 1947 contains provisions for the control of rents charged in respect of dwelling-houses in the Colony by reference to a 'standard rent'; for preventing the eviction of tenants who are prepared to pay an agreed rent, not exceeding the maximum permitted rent, unless there are special circumstances justifying eviction and for the establishment of Rent Assessment Boards in the Colony with power to determine the rental payable in respect of dwelling-houses. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court from the decision of any Board.

*Trade Unions*

(i) Ordinance No. 5 of 1947 repeals section 31 (1) of the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, (dealing with the prevention of intimidation) and the definitions of "injury" and "intimidation" thereby bringing the local Trade Unions law, in this respect, into conformity with the law in the United Kingdom as it now stands following the repeal of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, 1927, (17 & 18 Geo. 5 c. 22).

(ii) Ordinance No. 20 of 1947 repeals section 38 of the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, dealing with contributions of members of Trade Unions to the political funds and prescribing that a trade union member shall not be asked to contribute to that fund before the member first expresses his willingness in writing to do so. It replaces the said section by a 'contracting out' provision whereby the member of a trade union would be exempted from contributing to the political fund of the union on his giving notice in writing of his objection so to contribute. This new provision conforms with the law in the United Kingdom following the repeal of the Act mentioned in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

*Town and Country Planning*

Ordinance No. 6 of 1947 makes provision for the orderly and progressive development of land, towns and other areas throughout the Colony and to preserve and improve the amenities thereof. It also provides that the Central Authority established under the Slum Clearance Ordinance shall be charged with the preparation and the adoption of schemes relating to the said matters.

*Land Acquisition*

Ordinance No. 7 of 1947 authorises the acquisition of land for public purposes, such as, for the orderly and progressive development of land, towns and other areas whether urban or rural, to preserve and improve the amenities thereof, housing and other matters connected therewith. It contains provision to facilitate, with as little delay as possible, the acquisition of such land as may be required for the said purposes; and provides that the compensation to be paid for the said land is to be determined by a Board of Assessment, whose decision shall be final. The Board shall consist of the Chief Justice, who shall be chairman, and two other members one of whom shall be appointed by the Governor and the other nominated by the owner of the land. Claims for compensation not exceeding five hundred dollars shall be determined by a District Court and any person aggrieved by such award may appeal to the Supreme Court.

*Slum Clearance and Housing*

Ordinance No. 8 of 1947 makes provision for slum clearance and generally for the improvement of living conditions for family life. It establishes a Central Authority consisting of eight persons of whom three shall be representatives of the Public Health, Public Works and Survey Departments, respectively and three nominated on the recommendations of the Legislative Council. It will be the duty of this body to carry out the provisions of this Ordinance.

# Chapter IX: Justice, Police and Prisons

## JUSTICE

The English Common Law and all statutes of the Imperial Parliament 'in abrogation or derogation, or in any way declaratory of the Common Law' passed before 1899 extend to the Colony as far as local circumstances render such extension suitable and subject to modification by Colonial Ordinances.

Petty civil courts (termed 'District Courts') are established in each of the five magisterial districts. Each court is presided over by a Magistrate or District Commissioner who is *ex-officio* judge of the Court.

The jurisdiction is limited to claims not exceeding \$100. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court from any judgment or order of the District Court.

When dealing with cases which can be tried summarily, a Magistrate, District Commissioner or Justice of the Peace exercises jurisdiction under the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinances, and, subject to these Ordinances, has also the powers, privileges, rights and jurisdiction conferred on Justices of the Peace by the Common Law of England. Appeals from the jurisdiction of Magistrates and District Commissioners lie to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of British Honduras is governed by Chapter 153 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, and is presided over by the Chief Justice. The jurisdiction is the same as that of a High Court of Justice in England. Appeal lies from this Court to the Privy Council. The Court holds quarterly sessions at Belize during January, April, July, and October, and at Corozal similar sessions during March, June, September and December.

The number of civil suits issued in the District Court (Civil Jurisdiction) was 405 and, in addition, there were 9 claims for compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1942. A total of \$2,500.00 was awarded to the dependants of the deceased workmen in 2 of the claims, and a total sum of \$2,085.35 was awarded in the remaining 7 claims for partial incapacity.

The total number of criminal and quasi-criminal cases dealt with in the Summary Courts was 1,751 in Belize and 852 in the out-districts, classified as follows:

	Belize	Districts
Homicide .. .. .	6	2
Offences against the person .. .. .	93	86
Offences against property .. .. .	251	65
Malicious injury to Property .. .. .	4	1
Praedial larceny .. .. .	7	5
Other crimes .. .. .	10	27
Offences under Labour Laws .. .. .	5	4
Offences against Laws relating to Revenue, Municipal Road and Social Economy ..	261	257
Petty offences .. .. .	1,114	405
	<hr/> 1,751 <hr/>	<hr/> 852 <hr/>



## POLICE

*Composition*

In 1947 the British Honduras Police Force consisted of 1 Superintendent, 2 Assistant Superintendents and 193 other ranks. Of this amount 174 were employed on regular police duties and 22 on immigration work. Of the 196 members of the Force, 168 were born in British Honduras. The Force has its Headquarters in Belize and 120 men are employed at Headquarters. The remaining members of the Force are split up manning 5 District Head Stations and 20 Sub-stations, all of the latter having only one man in each. Police buildings generally are old and antiquated, but are gradually being replaced. In many districts, the Police, besides their normal duties, operate the local telephone system and Post Office and carry out the duties of school officers. This is particularly true in the case of the sub-stations. On account of the scattered positions of the Police Stations, a great deal of patrol work is done by single men on foot, on horseback and by dorey. The Police has 22 horses thinly distributed throughout the colony and many of the stations have either a paddling or sailing dorey attached to them, but transportation, especially in the case of the District Stations and Sub-stations, is very difficult.

*Prevention and Suppression of Crime*

Lectures and parades are regularly taken by the officers and N.C.Os. of the Force, but the lack of a proper training depot is keenly felt. Two officers were given a course of training in England during the year. One was a General Police Course and the other a course in Police Photography and Fingerprinting. Fingerprinting apparatus has been ordered and once all the materials have been received, instruction in the art of finger-printing will be given and this means of crime detection will be introduced into the Force. The Force has a Prisoner's van, a Police motor car, a Station Waggon and 6 motorcycles. District Head Stations are supplied with a motorcycle in such cases where they have roads in their particular area and the motorcycles are issued principally for traffic control and traffic checks. Due to the increased number of traffic and the opening of the Belize-Cayo Road, the volume of this work has been increasing steadily. The Force has two motor launches which are used both in the rivers and on the sea. These are exceedingly useful in the prevention and suppression of crime and as a means of communicating with those portions of the colony which are not connected to Belize by road. Mounted patrols in the districts do useful work and are particularly useful in getting about to the various villages in which there is no Police Station.

*Prevalence of Crime*

There was an increase in crime generally over the same period for 1946 and these are as follows:

There were 4 cases of murder, 2 of attempted murder and 2 of manslaughter; grievous harm to the person 166 cases, an increase of 37. Dangerous drugs 7, showed a slight decrease of 1. Praedial larceny with 12 cases for the year showed a decrease of 7, but stealing with a figure of 238 involving 265 persons increased by 40. Gambling (local lotteries) increased from 76 to 145 involving 153 persons. House-breaking 20, showed an increase of 3, but burglary 4, showed a decrease of 9. Traffic offences increased by 82 to a fig-

ure of 262 cases for the year. This is due principally to the increased amount of vehicles on the road and the opening of the road to the western border. Minor offences jumped from 705 to 920 involving 1,060 persons with an increase of 215 over the previous year's figures. A total of 2,190 cases were brought before the Courts by the Police involving 2,418 persons. Of this amount 2,125 persons were convicted, 155 were acquitted, nolle prosequi in 12 cases was entered and 126 were otherwise dealt with. The 22 men doing immigration work checked in 21,568 passengers into the colony and checked out 19,719 departing passengers. 53 persons were prosecuted on charges against the Immigration Laws. 1,012 aircraft arrived in the colony and 908 sea vessels during the same period.

### PRISONS

The authorized staff of the Prison Department comprises a Superintendent, a Clerk & Storekeeper, a Senior Warder, a Matron and sixteen warders.

Of the six prisons in the Colony, the prison at Belize is the principal. It is used to accommodate all prisoners sentenced for periods over three months. It consists of seventy-eight cells with a female wing of six cells. The prisons in the out-districts are situated in the Towns of Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Punta Gorda and El Cayo. These prisons are staffed by the police personnel; the senior non-commissioned officer being the keeper of prison. District prisons are under the control of the District Commissioner subject to the Superintendent of Prisons.

The figure of 567 persons received into the prisons represents an increase of 231 over the previous year.

Although there is insufficient accommodation to secure separation of juvenile offenders, they are kept apart (as much as accommodation will permit) from old offenders. Boys under sixteen years of age, who commit offences are sent to the Government Industrial School at Pomona Stann Creek. This school was transferred in the latter part of the year to the Airport Camp at Belize. A part time Probation Officer has been appointed under the provisions of the Probation of Offenders Ordinance 1934 and the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance, 1932.

At the Principal Prison, the trades of Carpentry, Tailoring, Mattress-making, Baking, Shoe-making, Book-binding, Tin-smithing and Fibre-craft weaving are taught.

The daily average number of prisoners set to work was sixty-four and their hours or labour averaged eight. Certain gangs of prisoners are employed outside the Prison Compound, cutting grass and growth around government buildings and other government property.

Female prisoners are employed on fibre-beating, washing and mending prisoners' clothes and the production of coconut oil.

## Chapter X: Public Utilities

Public utilities in the Colony are confined to the provision of electricity

and telephones. The chief electric power station is operated by the Government in Belize but the small Town Board of Corozal provides electric lighting for its own inhabitants.

The electrical supply system in Belize is three wire direct current, 220 and 110 volts, using overhead lines on poles provided from local pine. Current is supplied by three direct-connected, Diesel-driven generating sets of British manufacture, using rotary balances for the mid-wire. Fuel oil costs twenty-three cents and lubricating oil eighty cents for each imperial gallon; the total cost of oil in 1947 was \$33,081.

Charges for electric current are:

- (a) for lighting:
  - first 50 kw. 20 cents per kw.
  - over 50 kw. 15 cents per kw.
- (b) for domestic power:
  - 8 cents per kw.
- (c) for industrial power:
  - 3 cents to 7 cents per kw.

Consumers number over 2,500.

Ice is manufactured by the Electrical Department by a five-ton plant of British make and to supply the demand for ice it has been necessary also to operate hired plant of smaller capacity for the past few years. Approximate sales of ice during 1947 were 3,905,000 lb. at a rate of half a cent per lb.

#### TELEPHONES

The telephones are of the magneto type of American manufacture. Overhead cables use the poles provided for the electric wires; the airport, which is ten miles from Belize, is connected by means of a metallic circuit. In Belize there are four 150-line manual switchboards but the towns in the districts have smaller equipment. The trunk lines are copperweld single conductors using ground return. They are:

Belize—Maskall, Orange Walk, Corozal, Consejo ..	109 miles
Belize—Roaring Creek, Cayo, Benque Viejo .. ..	95 "
Belize—Stann Creek, Sittee, Monkey River .. ..	90 "
Belize—Hill Bank (Belize Estate & Produce Co. Ltd.)	45 "

There are 451 telephones connected to the Belize Exchange and 114 telephones on the trunk lines.

Charges for telephones are:

Business	desk	\$12.00 each quarter
	wall	\$11.50 " "
Private	desk	\$ 7.00 " "
	wall	\$ 6.50 " "
Out-district telephones		\$ 7.50 " "

Charges are:

- (a) for inland telegrams: two cents a word with a minimum charge of thirty cents.
- (b) for trunk calls: forty cents for each five-minute period.

## Chapter XI: Communications

Up to a decade ago, almost the only means of communication in the Colony were the sea, the rivers and a number of bush trails. It is inevitable that these means will continue to play an important part in the life of the Colony; they must be used for the transportation of supplies to the settlements on the banks of the rivers, for no road scheme could contemplate linking up all the scattered communities.

### RIVERS

The Belize River, which has always been the most important for logging purposes, is navigable, almost to the frontier with Guatemala, by doreys and other light craft for the greater part of the year, but, at all times, considerable ingenuity must be exercised to negotiate the numerous 'runs'. Specially constructed motor boats of shallow draught, with a 'tunnel' protection for the propeller, have for 20 to 30 years plied up and down the 120 miles of river between Belize and the town of Cayo with supplies, through all but the driest months.

### THE SEA

Coastal villages in Southern Districts are served by a twice-weekly sailing from Belize of a small motor vessel, which, once a week also connects with the port of Puerto Barrios in Guatemala to deliver and collect much of the surface foreign mails of the Colony. Regular services are similarly maintained to the Northern District settlements. Ships of the United Fruit Co. transport provisions and merchandise every two or three weeks from New Orleans but the passenger service which operated before the war has not, as yet, been resumed. Small schooners provide a regular weekly service between Belize and the Florida port of Tampa. Ships from the United Kingdom have begun to call at six-week intervals, and there were frequent, but irregular sailings between Jamaica and the Colony. The ships entering the Colony in 1947 numbered 935 with a tonnage of 189,905 compared with 1071 in 1946 with a tonnage of 138,202.

### ROADS

Road-making is a difficult and costly process in most areas; in coastal districts swamps are the chief obstacle; inland, dense undergrowth is a difficulty. Until roads reach the hills of the interior, where quarries can be opened, stone is not easily obtained.

Prior to 1935, there were only thirty-five miles of 'all-weather' roads in the Colony which were considered at that date to be suitable for motor traffic. Today there are 226 miles of main roads (including the recently completed Belize to Cayo road) and 39 miles of feeder roads, all suitable for motor traffic. In addition there are approximately 48 miles of cart roads, some of which can be used by motor cars during the dry season, and 154 miles of government maintained bush trails.

Colonial Development and Welfare projects in hand during the year included the construction of the Belize-Cayo Road, the new Haulover Bridge and a road connecting Belize to Hector Creek at mile 26 on the Belize-Cayo Road, a distance of 14 miles.

Approximately 14 miles of all-weather road was completed between Cayo and Belize to link up these two towns and seven miles of road was metalled. A temporary pontoon bridge was constructed across the Belize River at Cayo and the whole route is now being used regularly by motor traffic.

The Haulover Bridge was completed and opened to traffic in September.

The construction of the road from Belize to Hector Creek, which reduces the distance to Cayo by twelve miles, was commenced in September. An embankment of approximately a mile in length through bad mangrove swamp was built by the suction dredger and approximately two miles of stone base was laid through pine ridge.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The road from Corozal to Santa Elena on the Mexican Border at the Rio Hondo, a distance of 8½ miles, was completed; extensive repairs to the road through the four miles of mangrove swamp between Belize and the Haulover Bridge were carried out.

Cars in the Colony numbered 142, commercial vehicles 244, and bicycles 2,200.

#### AIR SERVICES

The Airport for the Colony was constructed some ten miles to the west of Belize in 1943 and 1944, and the cost was met from a Colonial Development and Welfare Grant. The airfield is officially named 'Stanley Field' to mark the association of Colonel Oliver Stanley, who as Secretary of State for the Colonies 'opened' the Terminal Building in January, 1945. There are two other airfields, neither of which is in regular use. Internal services were operated from June to December by the principal operating company when the service was discontinued, the number of movements were 136.

Transportes Aereos Centro Americanos (TACA) make daily stops at the Belize Airport to pick up mail and passengers and to refuel; the north-bound aircraft passing to Havana, Cuba, and on to Miami, Florida; the southbound aeroplane flying to Guatemala and other Central American republics. British International Airlines maintain a weekly service from Belize to Kingston, Jamaica.

A Mexican aircraft company, Transportes Aereos Mexicanos, S. A. (TAMSA) operates a passenger and mail service between Belize, Quintana Roo and Merida from whence a connecting plane to New Orleans is available.

Movements of International aircraft to and from Belize numbered 2,602.

#### POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

There are 30 post offices in the Colony. In 1947, the number of articles

dealt with was 935,374. The value of internal money and postal order business amounted to \$79,545, and to \$162,823 for external transactions.

Telephone offices, which also transact telegraph business, number 72. The local telegraph system is connected by cable across the Rio Hondo with Chetumal, by means of which telegraph business is transacted through Mexico with other countries.

There is a wireless station in Belize for the transaction daily of radio-telegraph business with stations in other countries—Stony Hill, Jamaica; Guatemala City, and New Orleans. Transmitting and receiving equipment is also installed at the Belize Airport, but this is normally confined to the use of Airline Companies. Excluding messages relating to the conduct of the service, weather reports, and press messages, 12,273 radio telegrams were transmitted and 13,235 were received in 1947.

Items of news interest and forecast for the Western Caribbean are broadcast daily at 12.30 p.m. from the Belize Wireless Station, ZIK2, on a wavelength of 28.31 metres. Storm and hurricane warnings are broadcast during the hurricane season from June to November.

The charges on radiograms to Great Britain, Eire, British West Indies, Bermuda, British Guiana, Canada, Newfoundland and to all points in the United States of America are as follows:

Ordinary (Full Rate)	..	..	per word	20 cents	
Code (C D E)	..	..	..	12 cents	
Deferred (L C)	..	..	..	10 cents	
Night Letter (N L T)	..	..	..	6½ cents	Minimum 25 words
(G L T)	..	..	..	6½ cents	Minimum 12 words
Press U.K. (Press)	..	..	..	2 cents	
U.S.A. (Press)	..	..	..	6½ cents	

#### PUBLIC WORKS

Public works, other than roads, completed during the year, included the construction of quarters for the Forest Ranger at Punta Gorda, Quarters for two clerks in Cayo and New Nurses' Hostel at the Belize Hospital.

## Chapter XII: Lands and Survey

Twenty sheets of the aerial survey of approximately 5,000 sq. miles of the northern section of the Colony were traced from the draft plans. These were completed by April 1947 and the Directorate of Colonial Surveys arranged to have these sheets printed in one colour as a provisional edition on a scale of 1/50,000. The original tracings were on a scale of 1/40,000. Later when a field check has been made fair drawings will be made and the sheets printed in colour.

It is hoped that the southern 3,000 sq. miles of the Colony will be aerial surveyed in the near future.

A considerable number of cadastral surveys were made and the layout of land known as TOPCO into 10—20 acre parcels and four village sites were continued.

Trails from Roaring Creek on the Belize River to Middlesex in the Stann Creek Valley were opened for the Settlement Commission.

## PART III

### Chapter I: Geography and Climate

British Honduras, 5,700 miles from the United Kingdom and 600 miles west of its better-known sister colony of Jamaica, lies on the mainland of Central America facing eastwards across the Caribbean Sea. With an area of 8,598 square miles, it is approximately the same size as Wales, and nearly twice the size of Jamaica. The Colony lies between North latitudes of  $18^{\circ} 29' 5''$  and  $15^{\circ} 53' 55''$  and between West longitudes of  $89^{\circ} 9' 22''$  and  $88^{\circ} 10'$ . To the North and North-west, the frontier with Mexico is formed by the River Hondo. The frontier with the only other neighbouring republic, Guatemala, is, in the south, the River Sarstoon from the Gracias a Dios Falls to the sea, while a line drawn from these falls to Garbutt's Falls on the Belize River and thence due North to the Mexican frontier on the Hondo forms the western boundary. The greatest length of the Colony from North to South is about 174 miles with a greatest width from East to West of approximately 68 miles. The coast of British Honduras is very well sheltered from the rough seas of the Caribbean by an almost continuous line of coral reefs and 'cays' lying at distances of from ten to forty miles from the mainland. The harbour of Belize is almost surrounded by sheltering reefs—a factor which has done much to promote the growth of the port as the most important in the Colony. North of Belize, coastal waters are unusually shallow with a general depth of no more than six feet. At Commerce Bight, three miles south of the town of Stann Creek, the deepest water in the Colony is found and until the pier was destroyed by a severe storm in 1941, medium sized, ocean going, vessels were able to berth alongside. For the most part, coastal lands are low and swampy and the northern part of the Colony is flat, large areas of land rising very little above sea level.

In the area south of Belize, there is a central mountain massif of a general elevation of 2,000—3,000 feet above sea level, comprising on the east, the Maya Mountain Range, and on the west, an area of pine ridge over 120 square miles in extent. The Maya Mountains, which include the Cockscomb Spur, possessing a peak of over 3,700 feet, are by no means fully explored, and difficulties of terrain are such as to make expeditions for detailed survey very costly.

The pine ridge provides some of the best scenery in the Colony, and the large tracts of open space suggest attractions for the tourist. Remoteness from rivers and roads would render the extraction of the pine an uneconomic proposition.

Numerous rivers, not all of which are easily navigable by any kind of craft, provided until recent times almost the only means of communication with the interior: the most important, the Belize River, can be negotiated in all but the very dry months by specially constructed motor boats of shallow draught, for 120 miles upstream. No thorough survey of the soil of the Colo-



ny has yet been made but it is believed that there are several uncultivated areas where profitable agriculture could be carried on, and there are similar hopes that a geological survey would not be found unproductive.

#### CLIMATE

In its climate, British Honduras is certainly favoured. Trade winds, blowing from the sea over a great part of the year, keep temperatures down, in coastal areas, to a level below that of such cities as New York and Washington in the summer months. Even in the hotter months of May to October the shade temperatures do not go over 96°. Inland, in the Western District, day temperatures may exceed 100° but cooler nights are experienced. During cold spells, which may occur between November and February, the temperature may go down in Belize to 50° though the mean for this period is nearer 70°.

Rainfall shows some sharp annual variations but the mean over the last five years is sixty-two inches in Belize, which is also typical of what would be regarded as a normal year. Average rainfall in the North is no more than about sixty inches while in the Southern District the yearly average is nearer 200 inches.

The climate of the Colony, which in the cooler months is particularly delightful, is quite suitable for people used to temperate zones and little, if any, impairment to health is suffered from prolonged residence. The high 3,000 feet plateau of the mountain pine ridge is quite suitable as a hill station, a project which may be realized when the major road programme is accomplished.

## Chapter II: History of British Honduras

The incompleteness and the paucity of many of the records from which the history of British Honduras has to be gathered make research fascinating, but, at times, rather exasperating. The humidity of the climate has not favoured the storage of documents, but such as remain provide stories with a Ballantyne flavour of adventure.

Of the early settlement of the Colony by Maya Indians, much remains to be told; but there is ample evidence of considerable Mayan settlements all over the Colony which indicate that a population much greater than that existing at present was supported, though on a much lower standard. For the archaeologist, there is wealth of material to be unearthed.

Here, we are concerned with the history of the Colony following the discoveries in the Western Hemisphere in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Columbus is thought to have sailed down the coast in 1502, when he set out from Cuba to find a passage to the Indies.

The first Britons to set foot in the country are believed to have sailed from Jamaica about 1638. Finding abundant supplies of logwood, then much in demand for the manufacture of dyes in Europe, they began a settle-

ment which was maintained with fluctuating fortunes through 150 years of struggle and strife with the Spanish. It appeared that friendly relations and treaties between Britain and Spain made no difference to the local struggle and it was not until 1798 that an end to the skirmishes could be written.

By 1670 when Spain made a treaty ceding to Britain all lands in the West Indies and in any part of America held by the British, the settlement, near the mouth of the Belize River and at St. George's Cay, an island some ten miles east of the river mouth, included 700 white settlers, among whom was the famous Admiral John Benbow. About this time, the prosperity of the settlement was brought to the notice of King Charles II by a report of the Governor of Jamaica that it had 'increased His Majesty's Customs and the natural commerce more than any of His Majesty's Colonies'.

An early reference to slaves was included in a report of an attack by the Spanish some distance inland at Labouring Creek in 1754, when it was said that, principally by their efforts, the raiders were repulsed. In 1779, the Spanish seem to have had some success when they captured and carried away a great many of the settlers at St. George's Cay. Subsequently, after suffering ill-treatment in Mexico and Cuba, the captives were allowed to return. A further development occurred in 1786, when, by the Treaty of London, Great Britain gave up her claims to the Mosquito Coast in return for Spanish recognition of the existing settlement in British Honduras, but this arrangement seems either not to have been brought to the notice of, or to have been disregarded by, the Spanish in the Caribbean area, as the attacks continued. In their final effort in 1798, they appear to have employed larger forces than ever before and little attention seems to have been given to achieving surprise for the local settlers had time for a number of parleys and to gather together their forces inferior in point of fighting strength. The action at St. George's Cay was decisive and final and, today, the anniversary is honoured by a public holiday accompanied by patriotic celebrations.

Events in Mexico from 1848 to 1867 had their repercussions in British Honduras, for the rebellion of the Indians of Yucatan in 1849 caused many Spaniards to settle in the northern part of the Colony. When in 1867 Mexico finally overthrew the Spanish administration, Indians made repeated raids into the Colony until a garrison of Imperial Troops finally made such incursions unremunerative.

From the very first beginnings of the settlement, until recent times, a greater measure of freedom to manage their own affairs appears to have been accorded to the people of British Honduras than was given to the settlers in other colonies. Until 1786, persons were appointed at an annual public meeting to act as Magistrates, on whom the responsibility of discharging executive and judicial functions devolved.

The King in 1765 gave a 'constitution to the people' founded on their ancient customs, the most important of which were legislating by public meetings and the election of magistrates annually by the free suffrage of the people. Admiral Sir William Burnaby, accompanied by Captain Cook, was sent to the Colony to codify the laws and customs and to arrange for the inhabitants of the Colony to be put into full possession of their lands and associated rights.

Following the declaration of the settlement as a Colony in 1862, a Lieutenant-Governor, subordinate to the Governor of Jamaica, was appointed, and in 1870, he became the President of a newly constituted Legislative Assembly, the composition of which included five official, and not less than four unofficial members.

Independence of Jamaica came in 1884 with the appointment of a Governor and a Commander-in-Chief.

The economic disaster, following a hurricane which overwhelmed Belize and the adjacent countryside in 1931, necessitated the seeking of the aid of the Imperial Exchequer and the subsequent surrender of the control of finance. As a result, major changes in the constitution were made in 1935 by the passing of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance, 1935, and, after amendments to this Ordinance in 1938 and 1945, the Legislative Council now consists of the Governor, as President, three official and ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated and six elected from five constituencies. The Governor was given power, in certain circumstances, to assent to any bill which the Council failed to pass.

The main economy of British Honduras has been based, since the first settlement, on her forests. By the time the demand for logwood declined, the mahogany tree had already become a more profitable export and it has remained for a century the principal forest product. Other exports from the forest have centred upon cedar, pine and the sapodilla tree, from which chicle gum is extracted. Coconuts have also been an important export.

With a forest tradition ingrained in him, the average British Honduran has not taken heed of exhortations to settle on the land, and indeed the experiences of some of the settlers have not been encouraging, for most of them have only eked out a meagre living. Bananas were flourishing when the Stann Creek railway project was begun in 1905 to improve transportation, but an imported disease has relegated banana growing to an insignificant position.

The citrus industry in the Stann Creek Valley is now well established and although during the latter half of the war a government subsidy to growers became necessary, due to temporary loss of markets, the original position had been regained toward the end of 1946. A sugar factory, erected in the sugar cane growing area in the northern plain in 1935, has not been productive of a high grade sugar, and it has not supplied, in entirety, the requirements of the Colony. Rum distilleries in the same neighbourhood produce a spirit which has only a local market.

The social development of the peoples of British Honduras has not, on the whole, been characterized by the sudden spurts which appear to have marked progress in other countries; rather, to the casual observer, has it been by almost imperceptible change year by year. The Education Ordinance of 1892 established a Board of Education, with the Governor as Chairman, to promote education, to provide for the administration of schools, and to allot grants in aid from funds voted by the legislature. In 1915 the Governor with the consent of the Board was empowered to declare compulsory school attendance areas. Noteworthy improvements in the standard of teaching recently have followed the provision of better training facilities and stimulation has come from the institution of annual Teachers' Vacation Courses.

Public Health appears to have received its chief impetus in the latter half of the last century, but administrators of the Public Health Ordinances are always somewhat discouraged by the absence of proper water supplies and sewerage systems. An improved water supply scheme for Belize was planned and it is hoped that it will come into operation during 1948.

During the last six years, the policy of sending for training abroad, under grants administered by the Comptroller for Development and Welfare, selected persons for hospital and public health duties has had encouraging results in a higher standard of service and efficiency. A scheme for the provision of meals for needy school children is as yet no more than an ideal.

It was not until 1945 that a Social Welfare Officer was appointed, and he was gravely handicapped by the absence of any voluntary organizations on which he could found the nucleus of a Social Welfare Scheme. There were no handicrafts, no co-operative or marketing unions, and no village community centres; but there were Credit Unions, the first of which was established only a short time before he arrived. With the return from Jamaica of an officer sent for handicraft training, handicrafts were introduced to the main institutions, the Prison, the Mental Hospital and the Industrial School for boys, which has been established in the Stann Creek Valley in 1926. With the resignation of the first Social Welfare Officer, plans are being made to associate Social Welfare with the development of the Colony. A Social Welfare and Development Officer was appointed during the year.

### Chapter III: Administration

The administration and government of the Colony devolve upon the Governor and an Executive Council, constituted by Royal Instructions given in 1936 and in 1945, and providing for three *ex-officio* members and of such persons, as the Governor may appoint in accordance with the instructions. At the close of the year, the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney General were the *ex-officio* members and there were five other appointments of whom the Senior Medical Officer was one. Appointments are for a period of three years.

The Legislative Council, in its present form, is constituted by the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance of 1935 together with the amendment Ordinance of 1945; the composition, with the Governor as President, being three *ex-officio* members (only two have been appointed, the Colonial Secretary, who holds the office of Financial Secretary, and the Attorney General) ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated by the Governor in pursuance of Royal Instructions received in 1936 and 1945, and six elected from five constituencies, there being two members for the Belize District.

All questions are decided by a majority of the votes given, the Governor having an original, and also a casting vote, but of the greatest interest to Unofficial Members of the Council is the provision in the 1935 enactment of what are described as the Governor's reserve powers, which, briefly, give him the authority to declare his assent to any bill, resolution or vote, which

he considers necessary in the interests of public order or good government, or to secure detailed control of the finances of the Colony, while financial assistance is being received from His Majesty's Exchequer. In making any such declaration, the Governor is required to inform the Council of his reasons and to report his action to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Governor may refuse to give his assent to any bill passed by the Legislative Council, or he may reserve his assent for the signification of the approval of His Majesty; no law is effective until it has received his assent.

The Judiciary consists of a Chief Justice and a Magistrate for the City of Belize. In the out-districts judicial functions are exercised by the District Commissioners. In addition, two or more Justices of the Peace may exercise the judicial functions of a District Commissioner. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, who is appointed by Letters Patent under the Public Seal of the Colony by the Governor. One of the officers of the Court is the Registrar General, who has power to administer oaths and take solemn declarations, or affirmations in lieu of oaths.

Justices of the Peace are appointed by the Governor by Warrant under his hand and under Public Seal; they may be appointed for the whole Colony, or for a district, or for a portion of a district. Similarly they may be removed by warrant.

Administratively the Colony is divided into five districts, of which the Belize District, containing the capital, has the largest population. The other districts are the Northern with headquarters at Corozal, the Western, whose administrative headquarters are at El Cayo, the Stann Creek District administered from Stann Creek town, and the Toledo District in the South with Punta Gorda as the only important town. The Commissioner for each district, excepting Belize, exercises the prescribed judicial functions and acts, at the same time, as Sub-Treasurer, Sub-Collector of Customs and District Postmaster. Except in one district the Commissioner is also chairman of the local Town Board.

Town Boards are constituted under the District Town Boards Ordinance of 1938, which gives power to the Governor in Council to add to, or delete from, the list of towns to which the Ordinance applies. Boards may be either wholly nominated, or partly nominated and partly elected: nominated members are appointed by the Governor.

A Town Board is required to meet each quarter and at such other times as required by its rules or when convened by the Chairman, who is appointed either by the Governor or from one of their number as he may direct. It is entrusted with the duty of attending to the good government of the town, and it may establish markets, slaughter-houses, baths and washhouses, may provide for public lighting, the naming and numbering of its streets, and carry on such other duties as the Governor orders by notice in the *Gazette*.

## Chapter IV: Weights and Measures

The standard Imperial Weights and Measures are prescribed by the Weights and Measures Ordinance, Chapter 63 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, which places on the Superintendent of Police the duties of inspection of weights and measures at least once in every three months.

The legal standards to be used are:

- (a) for articles sold by weight    ..    ..    Imperial troy and avoirdupois
- (b) for capacity (liquids and dry goods)    Imperial gallon
- (c) for capacity (goods usually sold by the bushel)    ..    ..    Bushel of eight Imperial gallons or 80 pounds avoirdupois
- (d) for extension    ..    ..    ..    Standard yard measure of 36 inches.

A copy or model of the standards must be kept in the office of each District Commissioner and inspections are to be made at least once in every three months.

## Chapter V: Newspapers and Periodicals

There are two newspapers published in the Colony, the *Daily Clarion*, a small one sheet evening issue and the *Belize Billboard*, a weekly Sunday issue.

For official purposes, the *Government Gazette* is issued weekly and is available to private subscribers on payment of an annual subscription of five dollars.

There are no other regular publications and, in the main, people of British Honduras rely upon the wireless set and certain weekly American publications for their news of the world.

## Chapter VI: Bibliography

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*Report on Belize Harbour and some of the Rivers of British Honduras.* By G. W. Dodds. 1936, Belize, Government Printing Office.

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*Late Ceramic Horizons at Benque Viejo, British Honduras.* By J. Eric Thompson. With notes on 'Classification of Painted Wares' by Anna O. Shepard. Reprinted from Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 528. Washington, 15th December, 1940.

*Living Treasure.* By Ivan T. Sanderson. Viking Press, 18 East 48th Street, New York, 1941.

*Brief Sketch of British Honduras.* Revised by A. H. Anderson. 1944, Government Printer, Belize.

LIST OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT

PRINTING OFFICE, BRITISH HONDURAS

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1.	Agricultural Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
2.	Customs Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
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19.	Board of Education Rules	..	..	..	..	..	.15
20.	Post Office Guide	..	..	..	..	..	.25
21.	Report of the Committee of Nutrition on the Colony of British Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
22.	Blue Book	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
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33.	Government Gazette—single copies	..	..	..	..	.1
	subscription per year	..	..	..	..	5.0
34.	Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of British Honduras	..	..	..	..	.2
35.	Cost of Education	..	..	..	..	.1
36.	Social Welfare (a series of nine broadcasts made by the B.B.C.)	..				.1
37.	Report of the Development Planning Committee, 1946	..				1.0

#### MAPS

1. Cadastral Plan of Belize, 200 feet to 1 inch.
2. Sectional Map of the Colony, 4 miles to 1 inch.
3. Small Scale Map, suitable for reports.

A limited number of maps indicating annual and monthly rainfall, geology, alienation of Crown land, etc., is available.

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